

Thinks Like a Cop, Fights Like a Marine  
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For me the building block of policing in any democracy is that of an individual police officer acting as an individual, exercising his or her individual discretion. For almost 30 years because of the threat posed, not only to the society at large in Northern Ireland, but posed very specifically to my officers, we have been forced to operate from fortified buildings. We have been forced to travel in armoured vehicles and officers when patrolling on foot have been forced to wear body-armour, have been forced to carry fire-arms, have been forced in many circumstances to be accompanied by their military colleagues...Those who are clamouring most loudly for de-escalation or demilitarization are the very people who have forced us into those military defense stances. Let them now shine and stop gusting and they will very quickly see change in the way we go about our business, and very quickly thereafter, significant change in the way we are structured.

-Ronnie Flanagan, Chief Constable  
Royal Ulster Constabulary

In the post Cold War era, the world has seen a dramatic shift in who makes war, why it is made, and upon whom war is made. The trend in the last half century has been a crescendo in conflict of a more fragmented nature, Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). War is increasingly less the pastime of the state, but rather, a tool for the disenfranchised, disaffected, and dissatisfied. While the United States enters the seventh year of warfare with various non-state entities it continues to search for a tidy little box in which to classify counter-insurgency operations (COIN). Since patterns of violence and structure in organized crime and gangs share characteristics with the twenty-first century insurgency, tactical successes of law enforcement provide insight into useful thought processes for COIN. In order to succeed in COIN environments, the Marine Corps must move beyond force protection, capitalize on similarities between insurgents and transnational gangs, and adopt lessons learned by domestic law enforcement.

### **Force Protection in COIN**

Deaf to the urgings of doctrinal publications, the Marine Corps appears to be focused more on force protection than counterinsurgency. Soldiers and Marines patrol the streets of Baghdad and the mountain passes of the Panshir mounted in the

mine resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicle,<sup>1</sup> fielding counter radio controlled improvised explosive devices (CREW),<sup>2</sup> and wearing over 30 lbs of body armor.<sup>3</sup> This up-armoring of man and machine has saved countless troops in the current conflict. The MRAP is a hard target, and consequently undesirable to attack from the standpoint of the insurgent (a light infantryman operating without the support of heavier formations).<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the mission at hand is not force protection. The U.S. military has emerged as culturally risk averse, inwardly focused, and clinging to the conventional philosophy that superior firepower and technology will defeat its adversaries. In the eyes of Chief Constable Flanagan, of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, this default attitude is detrimental to policing operations: Armored cars and ballistic vests "all represent barriers between us and the people we exist to serve;

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<sup>1</sup> DoD has increased MRAP production to over 20,000 armored cars of which 3,400 will be received by the Marine Corps. The intent of this plan is to eliminate the HMMWV from use in theatre for patrolling purposes. "MRAP," *Defense Update Online*, 2007, <<http://www.defense-update.com/products/m/mrap.html>> (15 December 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Bob Brewin, "Counter-IED Systems Jam Tactical Comms in Iraq," *Federal Computer Week Online*, 5 January 2007, <<http://www.fcw.com/online/news/97264-1.html>> (15 December 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Program Executive Office Soldier, Interceptor Body Armor, January 2006, <http://www.peosoldier.army.mil> (15 December 2007)

<sup>4</sup> Insurgents in the current conflict meet Canby's description of light infantry: "...decentralized, small unit warfare, dependant upon small unit initiative...a force of illusive irregulars...fighting the small war, disrupting lines of communication, denying intelligence, ambushing detachments and foraging parties." Steven L. Canby, "Classic Light Infantry and New Technology" (Report, C&L Assoc. Defense Consultants, 1983), iii-5.

barriers much unwanted by us, barriers forced upon us by others.”<sup>5</sup> Flanagan brings us to a pivotal point that the DoD may find foreign.

Whereas maneuver warfare focuses on the enemy, the center of gravity (COG) in COIN lies not with the enemy, but with the people<sup>6</sup>. Consider the five objectives of policing as set forth by the Royal Ulster Constabulary, founded in 1822: “the protection of life, protection of property, the preservation of the peace, the prevention and the detection of crime.”<sup>7</sup> Kinetic combat operations are but a small piece of the puzzle.

### **Similarities Between Insurgents and Transnational Gangs**

Current DoD publications present the cause of insurgency as economic. While some, if not many within Al Qaeda and its affiliates have taken up arms “...seeking a better life or relief of suffering by overthrowing an oppressive regime...”,<sup>8</sup> insurgency in the twenty-first century no longer follows the Maoist model of the Cold War era. The evolving conflict and patterns of

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<sup>5</sup> Ronnie Flanagan, “Maintaining Law and Order in Northern Ireland,” RUSI Journal 143, no. 4 (1998): 3, ProQuest (19 October 2007).

<sup>6</sup> In 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Warfare (4GW), COG is focused on “...collapsing the enemy internally rather than physically destroying him. Targets will include such things as the population’s support for the war and the enemy’s culture.” William S. Lind, et al., “The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation” Marine Corps Gazette (Oct 1989): 23.

<sup>7</sup> Flanagan, 2.

<sup>8</sup> United States Marine Corps, *Countering Irregular Threats: A Comprehensive Approach*, 2006 (Quantico, VA: MCCDC, 2006), 6.

terrorist activity are far more complex, attracting supporters for broad and varied reasons. In fact, the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan more closely resemble what Haussler refers to as the "third generation gang" (3G2) model: an evolved and perhaps networked organization, no longer focused on local dominance, but expanding into mercenary activities and financial acquisition, mobilization, and warfare all via the net.<sup>9</sup> Like Al Qaeda and similar terrorist client sub-organizations, 3G2 actors seek to create a shadow government or influence targeted states that are unable to provide security within their borders and whose officials are susceptible to recruitment.<sup>10</sup> To be sure, transnational groups such as M-18, MS-13, and the Maras are criminal in nature and owe their origins to local control of racketeering and narcotics.<sup>11</sup> Unlike 3G2 models, insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan seek to undermine the al-Maliki and Karzai governments through 4GW militant groups having political and theological origins. Despite this difference, the insurgencies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the 3G2 share many similarities: the

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<sup>9</sup> Nicholas I. Haussler, "Third Generation Gangs Revisited: The Iraq Insurgency" (Grad.diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 19.

<sup>10</sup> Max G. Manwaring, "Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency," (Carlisle, PA: SSI March 2005), 13-14

<sup>11</sup> These increasingly networked gangs have been classified as a significant threat to Honduran, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan national security. As such, their actions have garnered an international judicial and military cooperative response between these Central American nations. Federico Breve, Minister of Defense, Honduras, *"The Maras: A Menace to the Americas,"* Military Review (2007): 91-92.

fragmentation of these states, the urbanized nature of the current conflict, networking, mobilization,<sup>12</sup> and patterns of violence.<sup>13</sup> Claude Arnold, in a Congressional research report, further characterizes the transnational gang threat as "very mobile, highly adaptable to new geographic areas, and [maintaining] connectors to their native countries."<sup>14</sup> Arnold might as easily have been referring to Al Qaeda.

### **Domestic Law Enforcement**

#### **Intelligence and Security**

As offered previously, the objective of law enforcement is the security of the populace. Racketeering, gang activity, and narcotics-trafficking, like the existence of the 4GW insurgent, are direct challenges to the security of the populace. Domestic law enforcement has sought to deny the gang member the ability

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<sup>12</sup> Maire-Joelle Zahar, "Proteges, Clientes, Cannon Fodder: Civilians in the Calculus of Militias", (*Managing Armed Conflicts in the Twenty-First Century, Special Review of International Peacekeeping*, 2001), 7 quoted in Nicholas I. Haussler, "Third Generation Gangs Revisited: The Iraq Insurgency" (Grad.diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 23.

<sup>13</sup> In 2003 a rash of gang related murders included the decapitation of a female informant found along the Shenandoah River, and the severing of a rival gang member's fingers by machete wielding gang members. In 2005 a member of MS-13 was arrested in Texas for orchestrating a bus bombing in Honduras that killed 28 people. Arian Campo-Flores et al, "The Most Dangerous Gang in America", *Newsweek*, 28 March 2005, EBSCOhost (21 November 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Claude Arnold, U.S. ICE, Human Rights Violations and Public Safety Office, "Immigration Authorities and Gang Enforcement, " United States Attorneys' Bulletin, May 2006, 42, quoted in Celinda Franco, *The MS-13 and 18<sup>th</sup> Street Gangs: Emerging Transnational Threats?*, 2007 (Washington, D.C.:CRS, 2007) CRS-6.



to operate freely through human intelligence (HUMINT), area denial, and mobilization of the populace.

With respect to the disruption and dismantling of gangs, most actionable intelligence in law enforcement comes from the bottom up. Despite a dearth of assets, police officers, ICE agents, and informants move among the populace to gain information on networks, growth, and illicit activities. The FBI National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC), Gang Targeting Enforcement Coordinating Center (GTECC),<sup>15</sup> and the Esquipalas Conference<sup>16</sup> in Guatemala have fostered interagency cooperation between and within the U.S. and Central America. U.S. forces would likewise do well to focus theatre level intelligence on dissemination, reapportioning analysts and collections assets to the tactical level.

Law enforcement has also focused on area denial in order to limit freedom of movement for gangs within the population. For example, the LAPD has seen a significant reduction in gang activity<sup>17</sup> in the Rampart district after employing surveillance

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<sup>15</sup> Chris Secker, Asst. Dir. CID, FBI, testimony before the House Committee on Int'l Relations, 20 April 2005, EBSCOhost (21 November 2007), CRS-13-15.

<sup>16</sup> In October of 2006, the first trilateral (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador) meetings were held fostering cooperation in border security and countering organized crime and gang-related activity in Central America., Breve, 92.

<sup>17</sup> As a result of these tactics, the Alvarado Corridor, in which MacArthur park is located, has enjoyed a significant reductions in crime: Homicides - 38%, Shootings -50%, Robberies -14%, Major Assault Crimes -9%. Officer Charlie Beck, Commanding Officer, Rampart District, Press Conference 11 March 2004, EBSCOhost (12 February 2008), 2.

cameras to facilitate "virtual patrols" and conducting undercover reverse or "sting" operations in the vicinity of MacArthur Park.<sup>18</sup>

In the same manner, mobilizing the populace and disseminating information are crucial for security. In the early nineties, San Arias, California experimented with citizen-police committees to prioritize law enforcement operations. Committee members influenced areas such as task-organization, measures of effectiveness, readiness, and tactics. By further providing conference rooms and office spaces within the police headquarters, San Arias promoted transparency and partnership between police and the communities they served.<sup>19</sup>

### **Attitudinal Differences**

From a conventional warfare mindset, a single police officer armed with a service pistol cannot compare with a fire team of Marines in a 4GW environment. Nonetheless, the police officer walks a beat and maintains a presence in his district. He belongs to the community. He understands the people he protects, and they in turn protect him.<sup>20</sup> However, a police

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<sup>18</sup> William J. Bratton, Chief, LAPD, "Returning MacArthur Park to the Community", *Office of the Chief of Police*. April 2004. <<http://www.LAPDOnline.org>> (16 December 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Paul M. Walters, "Community Oriented Policing", *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*; Nov93, Vol. 62 Issue 11, EBSCOhost (12 February 2008), 21.

<sup>20</sup> Lieutenant John Draa, Baltimore City Police Dept, Ret., Interview by the author, 28 September 2007.

officer's training differs from that of a Marine with regard to "attitudinal predisposition".<sup>21</sup>

The very traits of ruthlessness and violence, which are desired in a Marine, are counterproductive to the mission of a police officer. A police officer's success and survival depend upon his emotional intelligence: "1)emotional self-awareness, 2)independence, 3)interpersonal relationships, 4)empathy, 4)stress tolerance, 5)impulse control, 6)flexibility, [and] 7)problem solving...."<sup>22</sup> In preparation for COIN, the unit leader must focus his subordinate's attention on the culture in which they will operate, thereby giving the Marine the understanding necessary to develop emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence traits, specifically impulse control and understanding interpersonal relationships, allow the police officer to de-escalate the situation rather than to increase the force to control a situation. In short: talking to the community is a police officer's most valuable weapon.<sup>23</sup> When compared with the Spanish-speaking deputy in LA County, the

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<sup>21</sup> Barak A. Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber, Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Training and Education Command, 2007), 231.

<sup>22</sup> Salmoni and Holmes-Eber offer these traits as concurrent with those that Military Transition Teams (MITT) seek in the Iraqi and Afghani security personnel to ensure success in COIN. Salmoni and Holmes-Eber, 231-233.

<sup>23</sup> William S. Lind, Advanced Warfare Seminar, group discussion, 6 December 2007.

English-speaking fire team in Anbar Province is at a decided disadvantage.

### **Non-kinetic Operations**

In the nineties, as the weapons and gangs on the streets became more powerful, police armored up, projecting a decidedly more militaristic image. Carbines replaced revolvers, battle-dress and tactical boots replaced the crisp "black and white" officer of the pre-3G2 world. In recent years, however, law enforcement has begun to look at non-kinetic/information operations as a solution to counter gang recruitment.

Specifically, law enforcement on Long Island has conducted intensive research into motivation and recruitment of potential gang members, developing gang awareness suppression and prevention programs (GASSP) to inform parents, students, and community members in order reduce gang recruitment.<sup>24</sup> In a more targeted manner, the Freeport Community Response Unit (CRU) deploys two detectives and community leaders to homes of gang members, confronting parents with evidence of their child's activities.<sup>25</sup> Parallel programs have been in operation in

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<sup>24</sup> GASSP participants have contributed information leading to the conviction of 65 MS-13 members in Freeport, NY alone. Michael E. Woodward, Freeport Police Dept, testimony before the House Committee for Education and Labor, 4 June 2007, EBSCOhost (21 November 2007), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Organization such as Freeport Pride, the Salvation Army, and the Hispanic Counseling Center have accompanied the CRU to immediately enroll at-risk youth in educational, vocational, and law enforcement orientation programs, with the aim of providing a similar sense of sacrifice, power, respect, and unity that teens seek in gangs. Woodward, 5-8.

Honduras and are equally applicable in a COIN environment<sup>26</sup>. In the same manner, the counter-insurgency must convince potential insurgents that the insurgency always ends in disgrace, imprisonment, or death, not martyrdom. Further, the counter-insurgency must seek proactively to involve youth in vocational programs or in becoming security force cadets before they can be recruited by insurgents. Upon parole, COIN needs to "repatriate" the would-be insurgent thereby counterbalancing the sense of belonging and unity offered by the insurgency.

Finally, just as the patrolman must be differentiate himself from the faceless SWAT trooper, the military must differentiate between the light infantryman, who protects and lives among the populace, and the heavily armed platoon that knocks down the door in the night.

The counter-insurgent, like the police officer, must never be perceived as the aggressor or he will lose his status with and the support of the populace.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> EREM, *Desafios*, and *Despertad* seek to inform and co-opt parents, students, and community leaders in the Honduras as a part of the *Policia Nacional's* *Mano Dura* counter-gang program. Further parole programs have involved religious organizations in spiritual guidance in rehabilitation. Breve, 93, 94.

<sup>27</sup> In the early 1970's the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Royal Green Jackets (8 Bde), British Army made significant strides in gaining community support amongst the Catholic neighborhoods. This was lost when the elite 1<sup>st</sup> Paras (39 Bde), in their characteristically aggressive fashion fired into a crowd in Londonderry where firearms were brandished by gang members. The actions of the Paras, were condemned by the catholic community and the British media. The second such incident of "rough and indiscriminant behaviour" by the Paras led to "Bloody Sunday". Unlike 8 Bde, 39 Bde dealt violently with challenges

To maintain this privileged relationship a "faceless" assault element acting on intelligence gathered by patrolling squads, must strike under cover of darkness. This division of labor not only supports the community-patrol inter-personal relationship, but has the potential to divorce the patrol (that has names and faces) from blood-feud blowback as a result of direct action.

### **Counterarguments**

These policing concepts represent a significant departure from current doctrine and will encounter the same opposition from conventional military leadership that COIN has experienced. The proposed changes with respect to intelligence functions may garner particular resistance as robust intelligence shops are required at the Division or MEF level for conventional operations. However, such changes could easily be effected through task organization and reapportionment in a COIN environment. Thus, conventional T/Os could still remain in place in the event that the U.S. finds itself in a non-4GW conflict in the near future.

Opponents will argue that tactics of virtual patrols and reverse operations may initially appear as overbearing to the

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from the Young Derry Hooligans and drove "on-the-fence" Catholic communities into the arms of the here to for unpopular Provisional Irish Republican Army. Rod Thornton, "Getting it Wrong; The Crucial Mistakes Made in the Early Stages of the British Army's Deployment to Northern Ireland," (*Journal of Strategic Studies* Feb 2007), 97-100.

culture of the community in which they are employed. However, the intent of these concepts is to discourage insurgent activity and recruitment rather than to entrap petty criminals.

Mobilizing the populace will certainly be met with hesitancy by military leadership, and may not be possible in the early stages of counterinsurgency. The populace must feel reasonably secure before it will support the counter-insurgency<sup>28</sup>. In this regard, the development of emotional intelligence traits is so vital. Counter-insurgent forces must be able to form a local security alliance tomorrow with the same militia that they were fighting yesterday.

Finally, military leadership will be hesitant to weight COIN with Psyop, civil-military operations, and work-study programs due to its risk-averse dependency on firepower and armor for force protection. These programs take time to bear fruit, but have proven much more effective than kinetic operations whether in Northern Ireland<sup>29</sup> or East L.A.<sup>30</sup>. To succeed, the U.S counterinsurgency must change its philosophy.

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<sup>28</sup> David Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice (Westport, CT: Praeger Security Int'l, 1964), 76-77.

<sup>29</sup> In 1994 after the PIRA ceasefire in Northern Ireland, the RUC formed community police liaison committees to provide transparency for catholic and protestant citizens. These committees met with gradually increasing success in giving citizens a vested interest in prioritizing police efforts and were a wide departure from the actions of the RUC in the 70's and 80's. Flanagan, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Prosecution of police officers for harsh tactics in the Rampart District led LAPD seek to change directions from a warrior policing model to a

## Conclusion

The end state is not merely to destroy the insurgency; such a policy is a never ending cycle. Instead, the U.S. must seek a change in COIN philosophy, military culture, and the focus of military operations. The method stresses the disruption and incapacitation of the insurgency: the end desired is a functioning government, capable of addressing the insurgent as a criminal within the context of a legitimate legal system.

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community based policing model. According to Chief Bratton, his police officers are required not to be soldiers, but rather "social workers, counselors, [and] housing advisors". William Bratton, "LAPD Chief on Making the City Safer, *NPR News and Notes*, 14 July 2006, EBSCOhost (12 February 2008), 2-3.



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